WEEKLY COURIER

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NEW YEAR'S BELLS.

Ring, bells, ring, with your mellow din!
Ring the Old Year out and the New Year in!
Like the voices of birds from the old gray
spire,
Let your silvery music rise higher and higher;
Floating abroad o'er the hillside bare
In billows of sound on the tremulous air,
Let it rise and fall with the fitful gale;
Tell over city and wood the tale:
Say that to-night the Old Year dies!
But the watchers look to the Eastern skies,
For the beautiful halo that tells afar
Of the welcome rise of the New Year's star!

Ring the Old Year out, with its sighs and
tears,
Its withering heart-aches and tiresome fears;
Away with its memories of doubt and wrong,
Its cold deceits and its envying strong,
Its arrogant pride and its errors dense,
All its pitiful shams and evil pretense.
We will heap them together and bind them
fast
To the old man's load as he totters past.
The ills that he brought he may take again;
Keep we the joys, let him bury the pain!
Ring soft, oh bells! as he goes to rest
Far in the shades of the darkening West!

Ring, bells, ring, with a merry din!
The Old Year has gone, with its care and sin!
Smiling and fair, at the Eastern gates,
Clad in tinted light, the New Year waits!
Welcome him in with the rosy band,
Who wait the wave of his beckoning hand;
Hope, with her wreaths of sweet spring
flowers—
Joy for the summer's glowing hours,
Plenty and peace for the fruitful fall,
And love for all seasons—best of all.
Ring merrily, bells!—o'er the blushing skies
See the beautiful star of the New Year rise!

—*Mrs. L. M. Blinn, in Inter-Ocean.*

UNAVAILABLE TALENTS.

My wife and I looked at each other in blank despair. We are such lively people that it is very seldom we are both blue at once, but this time we had good and sufficient reason. We had come to our last dollar. We had no certainty of getting any more money, and we were too honest to wish to be in debt. This was an extraordinary position for us, as we were considered by all who knew us to be such "uncommonly talented" people. I was always told in college that if I would apply myself I might easily stand first in my class, though in point of fact I stood somewhere in the twenties, I believe. I have since sometimes wondered if application may not be itself a separate talent, instead of being within the reach of all, as is often supposed. My wife was always the life of any company. She was as pretty and trim a woman as you would wish to see, and she sang ballads with really wonderful expression. I never saw a woman who appreciated a joke so quickly, and in amateur theatricals she was irresistible. Her talents went even farther than this. She read poetry so beautifully that everybody cried; and, on the other hand, she was so fond of mathematics that she studied conic sections one winter by herself, "for fun." We were both versatile, we were both lively, we were both mercurial.

Now, however, we had no money, and very little flour in the house. My wife had made a nice johnny-cake for the delectation of the children at supper, and they had gone to bed content, and were now peacefully sleeping. Meantime it became absolutely necessary for us to face our fate. I was a lawyer. I chose that profession, not from any innate sympathy with it, but because I could not be a clergyman, and would not be a physician. Of course I began to practice in the city; for though there seemed to be no opening there, I liked to live in the city. You know the theater, and music, and books, and pictures, and society, can hardly be had in the country. If I had been less talented—a mere clod-hopper—I could have gone without the refinements of life and been happy. As it was, it did not once occur to me that I could live in the country. I need not say my practice amounted to nothing. Those who have tried the same experiment know that some years elapse before a maintenance can be counted upon. However, I lived meanwhile on a modest legacy which had descended to me from an aunt, and married a wife. Florence had no money and no experience of housekeeping; but I hope I should not marry as I would select a servant. We got on beautifully in spite of the quicksands which already present themselves to the reader's mind. In the first place, we had no end of good times together, so our life was a success so far, and I know we were so happy that we made everybody around us happy too. And we lived within our means, small as they were. We would have liked a million, and I really think we could have spent it profitably; still we were not extravagant, and both of us were honorable and conscientious. We were at peace with all the world, and considered ourselves noble in character and talented in mind.

Unfortunately the failure of the bank in which my legacy was invested changed the aspect of things. We smiled at first, because we thought we should respect ourselves more if we were brave. And our friends said we bore it charmingly. "But of course it is not as if you had not your practice!" This was very well, but privately we knew that the practice would hardly keep us in boots and shoes; and then I had practiced long enough now to find out I hated it. I was not meant for a lawyer, and, to speak after the manner of the Methodists, it would have been "indulging a false hope" to suppose I ever should succeed. It seemed imperative that I should look to some other source for an income. I had written a play for the "Grecian Club," to which we belonged, the year before, which had been received with prolonged applause, but now, when I wrote another, and offered it to a manager, he declined with thanks. I had also written *vers de société* which had been pronounced by good critics as witty as Holmes; but when I sent them to the magazines, I received a neat printed circular saying that, "owing to the overcrowded state of the market," they could not accept anything more at present, but urging me to believe that "want of literary merit" had nothing whatever to do with their rejection.

Florence, getting desperate, advertised for private pupils in mathematics; but the only one who appeared was bent on studying logarithms, which she had found so tedious when a school-girl that she had skipped them altogether. This was too bad, for she is really a splendid mathematician, as far as the principles go, and that is probably the reason she hates eternal figuring so much.

With her music the contrary is true. She knows nothing about the theory, but her practice is exquisite; so of course she cannot give lessons.

She sews very well, I believe—at least we are all kept neat and whole—and she has good taste; but she says her stitches will not bear examination, and if she tried to sew better, she should work so slowly that she could not earn her salt. Her housekeeping is very *pleasant*, I know; but we have a hundred little idiosyncrasies which would make taking boarders impossible, even if it were not intolerable, so we have never seriously considered that question.

It will probably be thought cold-blooded in me to speak in this way of my wife's earning anything, especially when, now we had dismissed our girl, she had everything to do for the children and for me; and, in fact, I did not mean she should do anything, but she was always pondering the matter, and in some dark moments I gave in a little myself. I thought I would commit suicide, and let her support the children!

It is obvious that now neither of us felt as sure of our elevated character or of our talents as before the legacy was lost, and we had at last arrived at the above-mentioned state of blank despair.

"It is really too bad," said Florence at last; "it would take so little to make us happy, and yet we can't have it."

"There is nothing under heaven to be done," said I, gloomily, "but for me to go as a day-laborer into a factory; and as I am unskilled, and very old for a beginner, I can not earn enough to support the family, so I think, my dear, that you had better go into the same factory; that is, if we can find work, which I think doubtful in these times. And we will apprentice the children to the trade, so they will be better able to take care of themselves than we are when they grow up."

Florence made no reply to this remark, but shortly began a short catechism.

"Van, are you aristocratic?"

"No, not exactly," said I; "I like the things aristocratic people have, you know, but it is not for fear of losing caste that I object to the factory."

"I thought not," said Florence, complacently; "but of course you object to the 'grind,' and so do I. Now the question is, what are the necessities of life to you?"

"Oh yes," said I. "First, you and the children; second, a house that does not leak to cover us; third, corn cake and salt fish; fourth, a good fire in the winter; fifth, a warm woolen suit for each of us; sixth, some light active out-door employment, which will not reduce my spirits to such a point that I can't enjoy your society when I have leisure to sit down in the evening."

"And you would like to keep a horse?" said Florence, confidently.

"Why, yes," I said, rather surprised; "but since we have never kept one since we were married, it seems to me we might dispense with it now."

"Unless it came in the way of business," said Florence, calmly. "Now I know what your real views of the necessaries of life are, I have a plan which I had hesitated to propose before, thinking you might demand more." She unfolded a newspaper, and pointed to an advertisement.

FOR SALE.—The horse, cart and complete stock of a tin peddler. Excellent route. Business pays well. Sell only because family matters require a removal to the West. Terms easy. Address A. WICKS, Plainville.

I felt a spark of hope. "I suppose you are in fun, Florence," I said; "but I really think I should not hate this as much as anything else I see any prospect of trying. However, it will probably amount to nothing."

It then appeared that it was several days since Florence had seen the notice, and she had taken pains to inquire into the matter before speaking to me. She knew some one in Plainville who had learned all the particulars. It really was true. The business was good, that is, of its kind. "Of course," our informant said, "it did not pay anything like the law;" and we hoped he was right. The peddler really was going West, for he had money enough to live on, and his wife's health demanded change of climate. He would sell cheap and let us pay in installments, and we could rent his cottage for a very small sum.

It did seem providential. Riding about the country, even in a peddler's cart, had far more attractions for me than toiling in a factory. Besides, I had a secret assurance that I had no capacity for "toil," and I knew I could drive any horse in Plainville, at least. Then the selling, my good looks (I believe I forgot to mention these before), my gentlemanly manners, my good nature, my persuasive address, on which I had been complimented again and again, would all be of the utmost service to me in this business; and here I had been almost tearing my hair in my anguish at thinking that none of my powers were of the least avail in the bread-and-butter question.

And so we purchased the business by selling some of our furniture, and went to Plainville to live. I seriously believe that there is a niche for every one. Looking back on my time of despair, and comparing it with my present, I am grateful that I can say that while I then thought I was so constituted that I could be neither useful nor happy in life, I now find that I have been endowed with abundant capacities for both usefulness and happiness, and that no talent I possess has failed of bearing some fruit. And Florence says the same thing about herself.

Let me elaborate:

That a tin peddler is a useful as well as an honest member of society, who can doubt? He deals in simple, necessary articles, and by carrying them from door to door he saves vast inconvenience to numerous people. So much for use.

The cottage we lived in was not strictly beautiful, but it was comfortable, and in a pleasant place, with an orchard before it, and we trained creepers on trellises about it, and planted roses and flowering shrubs along the stone walls. It was a fresh, sweet place to live in, and the children had a lovely play-ground. At first Florence had no servant, and worked very hard; but she was young and well and strong, and she declared that she did not get so tired as she had often done in our old home with the thousand and one society duties from which she was exempt now.

"And the balance in favor of this is," she added, "that now I get tired in accomplishing something."

I enjoyed my life even the first day, for, as nobody knew me, I had no loss of caste to fear, and it was amusing to me to see the puzzled faces of my customers, who seemed to feel that in some way I was not to the manner born, and were evidently pleased with my humble airs and graces.

I like to study human nature and now I saw much of it at home and off its guard. This delighted me. Two rules I observed which made me respected and popular: first, I never entered a house unless I was invited; second, I never insisted that people should buy what they did not want. But I always had an excellent assortment of things, and any little novelty I might have I took pains should be seen at a glance, that it might recommend itself.

I am passionately fond of out-door air and scenery. I used to enjoy fast horses, but I have my dreamy side, and I hardly know anything more exquisite than to jog leisurely along the country roads at six o'clock on a May morning, when the buds are all bursting and the birds all singing, or to return quietly home in the late June twilight, just as the stars are coming out. I like to be out in a soft summer rain, too. There is enough to see and enjoy in the crisp autumn weather to reconcile me to the unwieldy cart I ride in. Even on runners it is not to be despised. I believe I like all the winds and weathers. Then I used to give myself holidays, often in winter, when Florence and the children and I had no end of fun. Of course we helped Florence do the house-work first, and then had the day for pleasure.

From May to October I hardly ever went alone on my journey. Every pleasant day Florence, or one of the children, or all the family, went with me on my rounds. How exciting it was, and how happy we were! We took our dinner with us sometimes, and played we were gypsies, and camped out in the most enticing places in the beautiful woods.

If I had to go along, I often took a book; sometimes I learned a poem, sometimes I even composed one, and, strange to say, the magazines which had disdained my contributions in the days when I desperately needed money, now often accepted my effusions with compliments.

In the evenings Florence and I sang duets, and popped corn, and read novels. As we had no social dignity to keep up, we felt at liberty to enjoy ourselves even better than in the law days, which is saying a great deal, for we always had such a good time then.

Then my business kept improving, so Florence could have a servant. Then we had more time for "larks" than ever. We got acquainted with our neighbors. There was not a person of any literary pretension in town except the minister and doctor. This state of things had its advantages as well as its disadvantages, because it is pleasant to be Cæsar even in a country village. Florence and I wrote a comedy for the Sons of Temperance, and performed in it with great applause. I suppose Shakspeare went to his grave without such recognition as we received. Florence sang in the choir so sweetly that several people who had hardly been to church twice a year before began to go regularly. We formed a reading club of all the young people who showed a spark of promise, and they had a delightful time, and thought they were literary, and we had a delightful time, and the modest consciousness that we were great benefactors of our race.

Once a year we put on our best clothes and went to the city for a week, and went to the theater, opera, concerts, and art galleries, and came home tired and happy, and convinced that tin peddling was a far healthier and happier life than it was possible to lead in the midst of such effete civilizations.

Let me be clearly understood. I did not continue the business when I had laid aside enough money to live upon without it. Meantime I can truly say I enjoyed it a thousand times better than I ever did the law, and to me at least it was a hundred times more lucrative, and I bless the day when my clever wife discovered a sphere in which all our odds and ends of talent would be available.—*Harper's Bazar.*

An Episode of Border Life.

"Wake up, Ramsey!" called out a companion of mine one morning at an early hour; "wake up or you will miss the lynching." I had gone to bed at an early hour, tired and sleepy, and had heard nothing of the murder which had been committed during the night.

"Hullo! Jim, is that you?" said I. "When does the thing take place?"

"Pretty quick now," answered my friend.

So hurriedly donning my clothes I sauntered out and found my "bunky" waiting at the door of the shanty. We walked up street a short distance, and finding a crowd of rough-looking miners around the door of a gambling hell, we pushed through and entered the saloon, where we found a Coroner's jury impaneled and about to begin their investigation. Two tables, used for dealing faro had been pushed together, and on them was stretched the dead body of a police officer. I had known him well. He was a splendid specimen of manhood, fully six feet six inches in height, and built in proportion, a quiet, inoffensive citizen, but a thoroughly good officer. On the top of the body lay a coil of half-inch rope, neatly rolled up, with a hangman's noose at one end. As we entered the Coroner called the first witness, who, having been sworn, stated that "on the evening previous he had been in the gambling saloon of Jim Beggs, where two fellows were playing cards. During the game they quarreled about something, and both got up from the table and entered the barroom, where they both drank, and again began to wrangle about the bets. They made considerable noise, and in the midst of it the officer came in and quietly said: 'Boys, less noise; this must be stopped.' He had no sooner said this than one of the gamblers jerked out his 'gun' and shot the officer through the heart." The witness had proceeded thus far, when a strapping big fellow, clad in a red flannel shirt and with pantaloons stuck into his bootlegs, a broad-brimmed hat half hiding his dark eyes, quietly walked up to the dead body, and taking hold of the coil of rope, said: "Boys, that's enough: come on," pushing his way out through the crowd, followed by fifteen or twenty of his companions. Without a word they walked down to the "cooler," where the prisoner had been incarcerated, and coming up to the six men on guard, demanded the keys. They told them that the keys were not in their possession.

"Hold up your hands, then," cried the leader; "let's examine you."

The guards held up their hands and quietly submitted to the examination. The lynchers, finding that the keys were not in their possession, went to a woodpile, and, picking up an ax speedily demolished the door. The leader then entered the room, and in a few minutes came out with one end of the rope over his shoulder, and at the other end was the murderer, the noose tightly around his neck. I had taken my stand on the opposite side of the street, and could plainly see the poor devil as he came out. He was richly clad, a large diamond stud glistened on his shirt front, on the little finger of his left hand was a large solitaire, and a heavy gold watch chain dangled from his vest pocket. His countenance did not betoken fear; in fact, to look at the man one would have thought the whole performance was but a joke. After reaching the street the crowd seized hold of the rope and led the victim down to an old building, where a beam jutted over the sidewalk. When they reached this point one of the number climbed out over the beam, and the end of the rope was thrown to him. After pulling the slack up he slowly let it down on the other side, and then leaned his elbows down on the beam, and took a deliberate look at the crowd below. The leader of the committee then approached the gambler and said: "Well, Jim, yer time's short; want to say anything?"

Jim replied, and said: "Now, look here, can't you jist as well put a few bullets through me: what's the difference? I've got $1,000 in my pockets, and you can divide the whole thing among you if you don't hang. Will you do it?"

"Not by a blamed sight," said the leader. "You murdered a good man, and you've got to swing for it."

"Well," said Jim, "go on; I suppose I must swing; this is the third man I've put away, so I suppose my time's up."

He had no sooner said the words than the rope was quickly pulled up, and Jim was dangling in a horrible manner. His hands not being tied, he reached up over his head and grasped the rope, and thus released the strangulation.

"That won't do, Jim," cried the leader, and they let the dangling victim down again and speedily tied his hands behind him, and again elevated him, where he hung for nearly an hour. After it was ascertained that their victim was dead, the "committee" sent for a photographer, and had a photograph taken of the entire "gang." In the foreground the committee could be seen—every face easily recognized—while just behind them was the dangling dead man, his diamonds and jewelry shining in the early morning sun, and above him sat the assistant hangman, evidently proud of his station. The entire proceedings were as quiet as could possibly be; not a word or shout could be heard. The companion of the murderer was given six hours' time to get out of town, and was met some two miles away by some of his friends, who asked him where he was going.

"Oh, the boys gave me six hours to get out of town," said he, "and I am now five hours ahead of time."

This was my first initiation into Western life.—*Pittsburgh Post.*

PERSONAL AND LITERARY.

Mrs. Southworth has evolved forty-two books in all, and her publishers have just issued a new and uniform edition.

It was calculated in England some time ago that not one book in 1,840 goes through a second edition, and not one in many thousands a third.

Mr. Tennyson's new play, which is shortly to be produced by Mr. Irving, is described as highly tragic. The scene is laid in a city of Asia Minor.

The London *Lancet*, a medical weekly of the highest rank, devotes an article to Edwin Booth's Hamlet, and says Mr. Booth takes the right view of Hamlet's mental condition.

Prof. Fawcett, the British Postmaster-General, is also Professor of Political Economy in Cambridge, and does not permit the duties of one position to interfere with those of the other.

Richard Grant White is large and strong, with mutton-chop whiskers and long, brownish-gray hair, parted in the middle. He is fond of music and of wood-turning, as well as of literature.

Mrs. Lynn Linton, the clever novelist, is very ill in Florence. She is threatened with total blindness and is shut up in a dark room. Her physicians say that she has just escaped brain fever.

Mrs. Schliemann helps her husband in all his scientific labors, superintending excavations under his direction and bravely disregarding sun and dust. She wears while engaged in this work a plain, trim dress and jacket, and carries a stout umbrella.

The English think that the Rev. Joseph Cook reads too rapidly. The London *Echo* says: "Mr. Cook does not allow his hearers the tenth part of a second to weigh the exact meaning of some unaccustomed word. As the English people are not all theologians or metaphysicians, Mr. Cook, as a lecturer, would do well to accommodate himself to our deficiencies."

HUMOROUS.

Some men are called muffs because they are used to keep a flirt's hand in.

Natur luvs phun; if she doesn't she never would have made a munky.—*Josh Billings.*

The Lowell *Courier* is of the opinion that "any man will acknowledge the corn when it is stepped on."

It's hope that keeps us up.
It's hope that keeps our memories green.
It's hope that makes our lives sublime.
It's soap that keeps us clean.
—*Yonkers Gazette.*

We may have descended from the monkey.—*Jersey City Journal.* Well, well: you needn't talk about family matters in public.—*Graphic.*

A Boston man has invented a new word, "Astronometeorology," and already there are six men in the country who can pronounce it.—*Boston Post.*

Fashion says, "Gathered waists are still very much in favor with young ladies." They are with the young gentlemen also.—*N. O. Picayune.*

There are some thirty-five thousand more females than males in Philadelphia, and yet some people wonder why some girls marry bow-legged men.—*Philadelphia Chronicle.*

"Why Does Papa Sleep So Cold?" asks a sentimental song. Probably because mamma ties herself up in the bed-clothes and then rolls over to the wall with them.—*Chicago Tribune.*

"Accidents will happen." Bragson (at last winging a pheasant after missing right and left all day)—"Ah, ha! Knocked him over that time, Jenkins!" Keeper—"Yes, sir; they will fly into it sometimes!"—*Punch.*

Little Jimmy is laid up with the measles and suffers a great deal; but when he was asked how he liked the measles, he brightened up and exclaimed: "The doctor says I can't go to school for a week. That's how I like it."

Yesterday afternoon an old woman, weighing about 300 pounds, slipped in crossing the street-car track, and came down in the mud and water. It sounded like dropping a custard out of a second-story window. The driver of the car held up his mule, and called out: "I say, if you will get up and let me drive on, you can sit down there again as soon as the car passes."—*Galveston News.*

Commercial Courtesy.

There are some merchants who regard drummers as a nuisance, and refuse to talk to them, or if they say anything at all, it is only a request to look at a conspicuously posted picture of a man in a coffin, with the legend underneath: "This man was talked to death by a drummer." But old Twopercent, whose place of business is on Galveston avenue, is not that kind of a merchant prince. The other day a New York drummer was passing his place of business, when he called him across the street and asked to look at his samples. The drummer could hardly believe his senses. He had never been treated that way before in Texas. It was hardly a minute before he had his samples spread out in anticipation of a $5,000 order. Old Twopercent got the very bottom price of everything in his line, but when the New York drummer asked him if he didn't want to order some of the goods, the reply was:

"Not mooch. You do not shuppose dot is vot I called you in for?"

"What did you call me in for then?" asked the drummer.

"I only wanted to see vot your figures vos, so ash to find out if I vas not selling my own goods too low."—*Galveston News.*

—A number of young ladies in Oroville, Cal., are organizing a brass band.